

Safety On The Road

Big Safety Concerns In Small Cars

Small vehicles can be fun to drive, easy to maneuver and cheap on fuel. However, they can also be difficult to see on streets and highways, and the occupants can be more seriously injured in collisions than those in larger, sturdier vehicles.

Here are some safe-driving reminders for operators of small vehicles:

- Be aware of the size differences between your vehicle and others. Even an average-sized passenger car can be difficult for a driver in a high truck cab to see. A car's silhouette is low and small in comparison to a truck.
- Use your lights to help other drivers see you. The third tail-light in the rear window of a passenger vehicle increases your visibility. Blink your lights or sound your horn if you think you are being overlooked.
- Under-ride accidents are extremely serious and very often fatal to the occupants of a car. These occur when a smaller vehicle travels under the trailer of a large transport unit, either from the side in an intersection collision or from the rear. Do not follow too closely, and watch for vehicles running lights at cross streets.
- Following too closely prevents other drivers from seeing you and it can make it difficult for you to watch the traffic situation around you. Keep two or three large-car lengths between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Do not linger in the other driver's blind spots when traveling beside trucks, buses and other large vehicles in multi-lane roads.
- Be prepared for changes in the roadway surfaces. Potholes, gravel and grooved pavement can cause a small vehicle to spin out of control.
- Avoid over-crowding in a small vehicle. Packing in too many passengers can make safe driving more difficult and can increase the severity of injuries in a collision. All occupants of the vehicle should be restrained by proper seatbelts.
- Be aware of the possibility of receiving more serious injuries in a small, lightweight vehicle in a collision. Besides having a less substantial vehicle structure surrounding you, your vehicle may not be heavy enough to push over breakaway light standards, signs and median barriers designed to give way under impact with heavier vehicles.
- Also be aware of the hazards associated with the design of your vehicle, such as the roll-over potential for certain light utility vehicles. Adjust your driving accordingly.
- Allow more time to pass other vehicles and to travel through intersections in a small, under-powered vehicle.
- Do not give in to the temptation to pass illegally on the right, even though the space there looks like it is made for your small car. The other driver will not be expecting you to be there and could unexpectedly swing into your path.
- Small vehicles can brake or swerve quicker than larger vehicles or trucks. Do not make movements too fast for other vehicles.
- Small cars usually have smaller engines, so maneuvers such as accelerating and passing may take longer to perform.
- Small cars are generally lighter and are affected by winds.
- Drivers of small vehicles may have problems seeing beyond the vehicle in front of them, so they should be even more cautious about following too closely.

You are vulnerable to accident and injury in a small vehicle. Do your best to watch out for other traffic and to be seen by other drivers.

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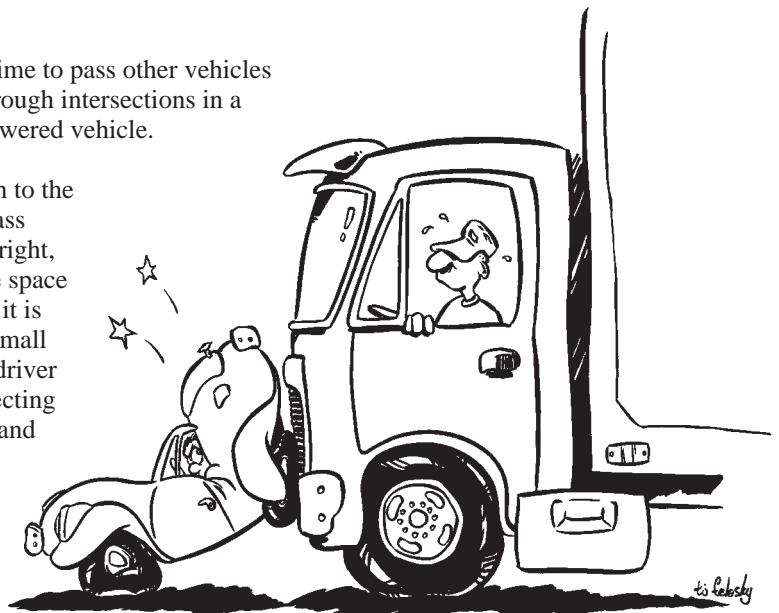
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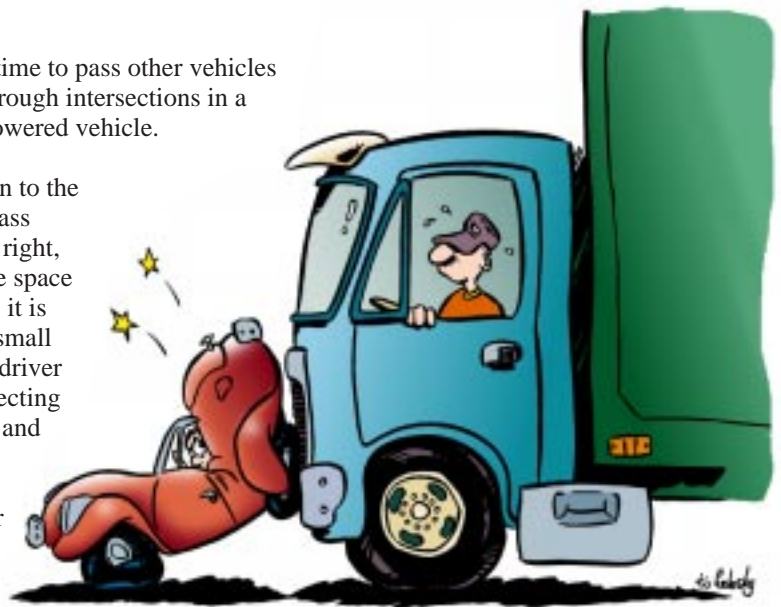
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